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EEL1104 The Rosiers, Wood Street – Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment

Ellendale Environmental Limited was commissioned Woolley & Wallis LLP, on behalf of Mrs and Mr Greenhaulgh, to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for an area of land at The Rosiers, Wood Street, Clyffe Pypard, Swindon, SN4 7PZ ('the site'). It is proposed to develop the site for an agricultural barn and associated track with a new access from Wood Street ('the proposed development').

The site is located in Wiltshire, approximately 3.8km to the south of Royal Wootton Bassett, at OS grid reference SU 06972 77991.

Using current information on the proposed development, this assessment estimates the BNG anticipated to be achieved through the site plans and has been undertaken with reference to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool[1]. This is a biodiversity accounting tool used for the purposes of calculating biodiversity net gain for a site and is based on 'biodiversity units' calculated according to the habitats present and their size, distinctiveness and condition. This enables the quantitative calculation of the predicted change in biodiversity value as a result of a development, with the objective of achieving a net gain in biodiversity.

In England, BNG is mandatory[2] under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) and developers must deliver a BNG of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development. Positive effects for biodiversity are encouraged in new developments by contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks.

The site currently comprises primarily of poor condition modified grassland, which has been grazed and mown with a low sward height. It is relatively species-poor, with species such as perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, white clover *Trifolium repens*,

[1] Natural England - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
[2] From 12th February 2024.

dandelion *Taraxacum officinale agg.*, white dead-nettle *Lamium album*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus L. agg.*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, dwarf thistle *Cirsium acaule*, cleavers *Galium aparine*, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* and greater plantain *Plantago major*.

Photograph 1: showing a view of the grassland, facing north-west

There is a small patch of bare ground (33m^2) around the site's existing access gate, related to farm vehicles entering the field.

Based on this, the pre-development site habitat units have been determined using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool, Google Earth Pro, and site area figures provided by the client. This is summarised in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Site habitat (pre-development)

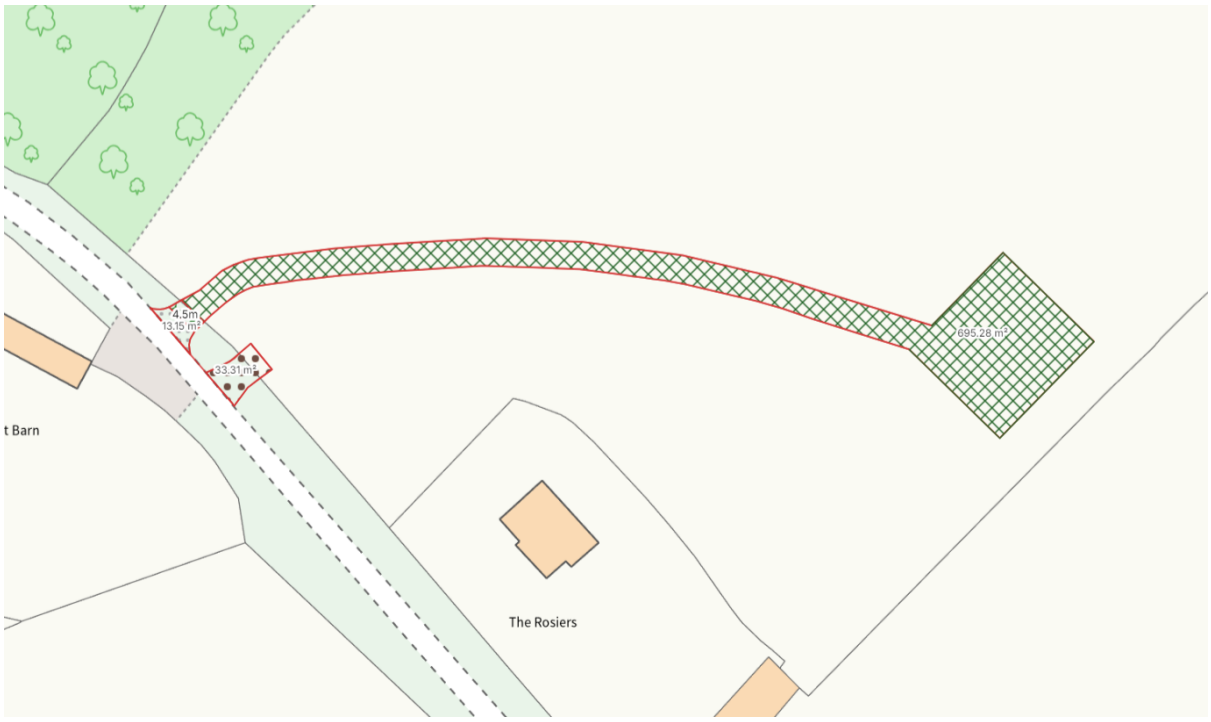
BROAD HABITAT	HABITAT TYPE	AREA (HA)	CONDITION	TOTAL HABITAT UNITS LOST	COMMENTS
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.070304	Poor	0.14	Modified/semi-improved grassland in field and road verge which will become bare ground access.
Urban	Bare ground	0.003331	Poor	0.01	Entering the site via the existing gate from Wood Street, there is a small area of bare ground/earth, likely related to farm vehicles entering the field.

The post-development site habitat units have been determined using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool and this is summarised in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Site habitat creation (post-development)

BROAD HABITAT	HABITAT TYPE	AREA (HA)	CONDITION	TOTAL HABITAT UNITS	COMMENTS
Urban	Bare ground	0.040257	Poor	0.10	Access track through existing grassland; will become bare ground.
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.031441	Condition Assessment N/A	0.00	Proposed barn and hardstanding.
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.003331	Poor	0.00	Grass replanted/allowed to re-grow by existing access gate.
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.032572	Moderate	0.06	Two moderate condition trees of medium mature size to be planted within the site along the boundaries.

Map 1: Site overview with existing and proposed access, and footprint of barn and track



Based on this, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool indicates that the development will result in a net gain of **24.74%** for non-linear habitats, thus complying with local and national planning policies for biodiversity net gain.

There are hedge linear habitats within the red-line boundary, with a native hedgerow that is in poor condition and has a relatively low diversity of species. The proposal seeks to remove 4.5m of this hedgerow to develop an alternative access route into the site from Wood Street. The applicant proposes to compensate for this habitat loss by planting 4.5m of native hedgerow with taller standard trees.

Table 3: Site hedge linear habitat (pre-development)

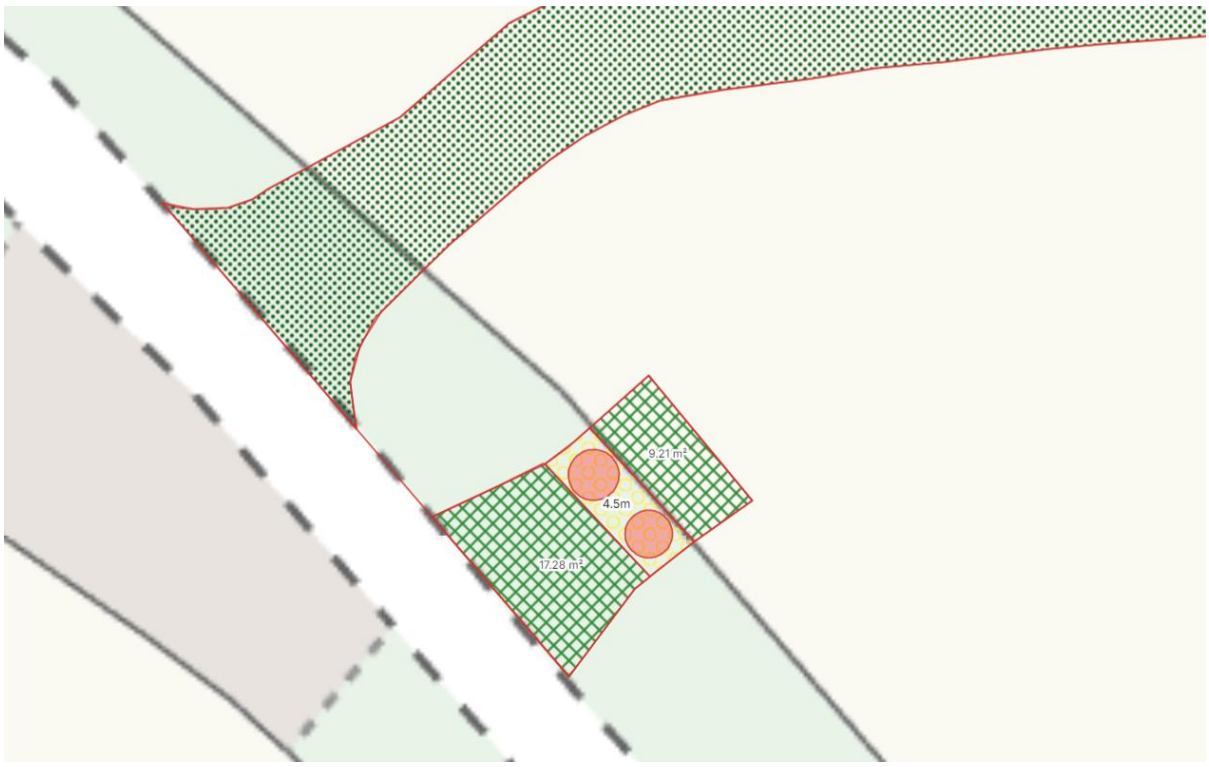
HABITAT TYPE	LENGTH (KM)	CONDITION	TOTAL HABITAT UNITS LOST	COMMENTS
Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.0045	Poor	0.02	New access to field from Wood Street, with removal of 4.5m of hedgerow (species-poor and in poor condition/heavily managed), and infilling this stretch of ditch.

The post-development hedgerow habitat units have been determined using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool and this is summarised in **Table 4**.

Table 4: Site hedge linear habitat (post-development)

HABITAT TYPE	LENGTH (KM)	CONDITION	TOTAL HABITAT UNITS LOST	COMMENTS
Native hedgerow with trees	0.0045	Moderate	0.03	Planting hedgerow with trees in the existing gap in hedgerow where there is currently a gate used to access the field. Managed to moderate condition.

Map 2: Site area and new access to the west, showing replanted hedgerow and two trees



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Based on this, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool indicates that the development will result in a net gain of **40.06%** for linear hedgerow habitats, thus complying with local and national planning policies for biodiversity net gain.

Positive effects for biodiversity are encouraged in new developments by contributing to the enhancement of biodiversity, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks. Examples of additional biodiversity improvements for the proposed development could include:

- Bird nesting boxes (both small-hole and open-fronted) could be placed within the site boundaries to create nesting opportunities for small bird species; and
- Bat boxes could be placed on the new building or around the site boundaries, if possible, to create roosting opportunities for bat species.